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ABSTRACT

The prevailing view of secrets as undesirable or unhealthy is challenged in this exploration of the meaning and significance of secrecy. As a crucial dimension of human development, secrets lead to a child's awareness of inner space and external worlds. This in turn leads to the development of a sense of self, personal responsibility, autonomy, and intimacy in human relations. Numerous accounts of everyday experiences with secrecy are presented which challenge assumptions about the ethics of silence, privacy, reserve, and lying. Chapters are: (1) The Question of Secrecy; (2) Modes of Secrecy; (3) How Do We Experience Secrecy?; (4) Secrecy in Fiction; (5) Where Do Secrecy and Privacy Come From?; (6) Differences Between Secrecy and Privacy; (7) The Physiognomy of Secrecy; (8) Secrecy and the Origin of Identity; (9) The Development of Inwardness; (10) Secrecy and Postmodern Culture; (11) Lying and Secrecy; (12) The Childhood of Secrecy; (13) Guilt, Shame, and Embarrassment; and (14) The Pedagogy of Secrecy. While revealing the pervasiveness of secrets in human life, this book explores the ways in which teachers and parents can give the experience of secrecy the opportunity to bring meaningfulness to the lives and relationships of children. Contains a Notes section, 96 references, and an index. (LSR)

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